

How Uncle Sam Is April-Fooling Mother Nature

THE usual conception of Uncle Sam—the personification of the United States government—is a staid, dignified old gentleman, completely immersed in the affairs of state and the betterment of the ways of his people and nephews. It is difficult to imagine such a character indulging, as it were, in the pranks and jests which have, through centuries of usage, become a part of All Fools' day, the 1st of April.

But while the sober old gentleman cannot be said to take part in the brick-and-the-hat or the pocketbook-on-a-string jokes with which many persons will doubtless be fooled today, he has, so to speak, set himself up as a practical joker on nature, and many are the pranks which he has played and is playing along this line. One difference between these governmental jests and the ordinary April fool jokes, however, is that the former are intended solely for the betterment of the people of the nation. The others themselves are quite as humorous, if one views them from the standpoint of nature herself.

Consider, for example, the case of the Gunnison river, in Colorado, which for countless thousands of years flowed eastward toward the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Here was a turbulent mountain stream that coursed on its way, giving pleasure only to artists who delighted in the eddies and rapids of its mighty canyon and the picturesqueness of its location. Viewed from a utilitarian standpoint the river was useless, unless perhaps one could harness it for the sake of water power. The hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of water which flowed through it each year were wasted, so far as efficiency was concerned.

But Uncle Sam, in the person of certain representatives of the reclamation service, visited the stream and determined to harness its waters in some manner so that they would irrigate the section on the other side of the mountains which were so sorely in need of moisture. How to accomplish this was a difficult problem.

A huge mass of rock and dirt, six miles wide, separated the Gunnison from the valley which gave promise of a rich yield of crops. An adequate water supply could be obtained. Finally, in sheer desperation, the government determined to "twist the entire course of the river and to send it toward the Pacific instead of the Atlantic."

In order to accomplish this it was necessary to cut a tunnel through the heart of the mountain, a tunnel large enough and strong enough to carry all the water of the river to the parched valley beyond. On the face of it this seemed to be a gigantic undertaking, and so it proved. Nothing like it had ever been attempted in the history of the world; but, then, Uncle Sam delights in doing things that have never been done before.

Accordingly he called for volunteers from among his reclamation engineers to determine the exact spot where the tunnel should be commenced. In itself a hazardous task, for there was no record of any man having braved the rapid of the Gunnison and living, while of the government engineers, however, succeeded in the attempt by lying flat on their backs and allowing the swift current to carry him several miles down stream, while he closely scrutinized the walls of the canyon for the crucial spot.

This located, the reclamation service went to work and, after almost a year of labor, succeeded in driving the six-mile tunnel—the longest of its kind in the world—completely through the heart of the mountain. Then the floodgates were opened and the Gunnison, fooled by government ingenuity, slipped quietly into the cement-lined bed which Uncle Sam's men had prepared for it and changed its course entirely.

As a result, 60,000 acres of desert land have been made fertile and prosperous and, eventually, 60,000 more acres will be added to this. This joke on nature, therefore, will add not less than 120,000 acres to the productive territory of the country, which is surely a splendid result for any jest—practical or otherwise.

The Gunnison river is not the only stream which Uncle Sam has fooled in this manner. He has also taken the Strawberry river, in Utah, which was formerly useless from a standpoint of utility and, by means of a four-mile tunnel, sent it into the



HOW MINERS APRIL FOOL THE DEADLY GAS-LADEN ATMOSPHERE WITH UNCLE SAM FED THIS CHINESE DAISY WITH A SPOON AND DECEIVED IT INTO BECOMING A CHRYSANTHEMUM.

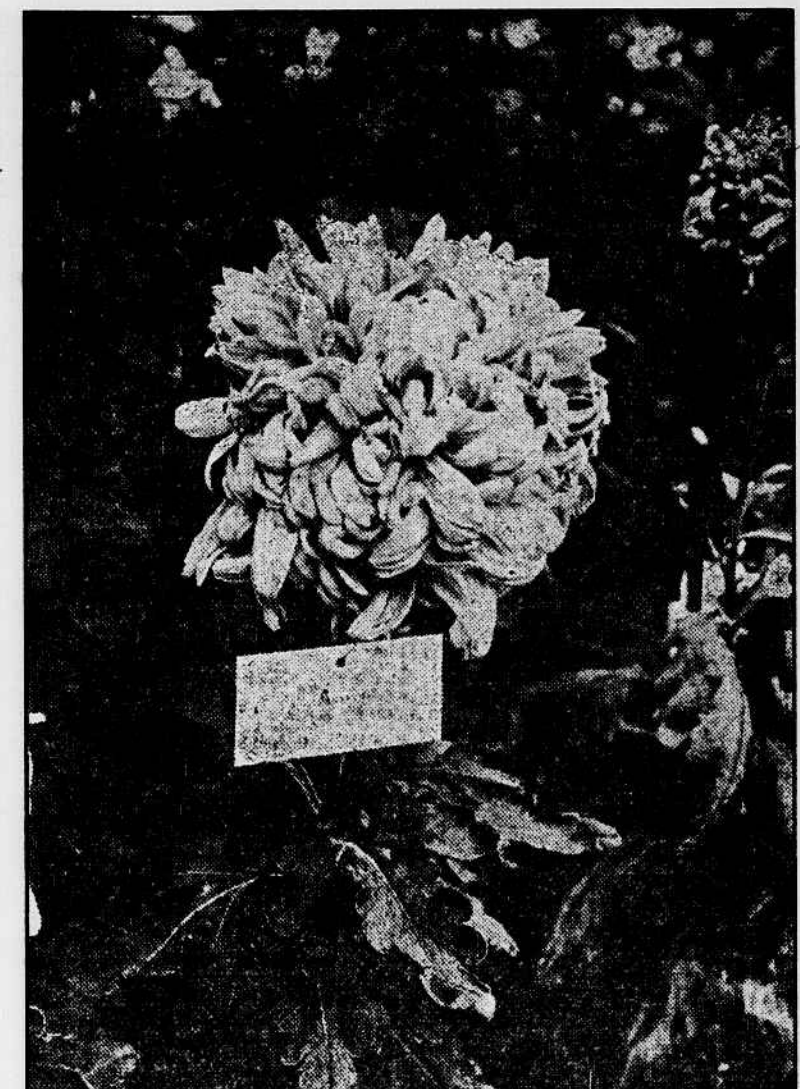
Great Salt Lake valley, which formerly had no outlet to the sea, and no adequate fresh-water supply. The land now served by the Strawberry river is comparable in size to the Holy Land, and the introduction of this large amount of river water has made possible the raising of large crops on this land which formerly would perish for lack of moisture.

Again, the St. Marys river, in Montana, which formerly drained into the Hudson Bay region, was fooled by means of a twenty-nine-mile canal and induced to flow through the Milk river valley into the Missouri, enriching en route a vast stretch of territory which was formerly barren of sufficient water for its needs.

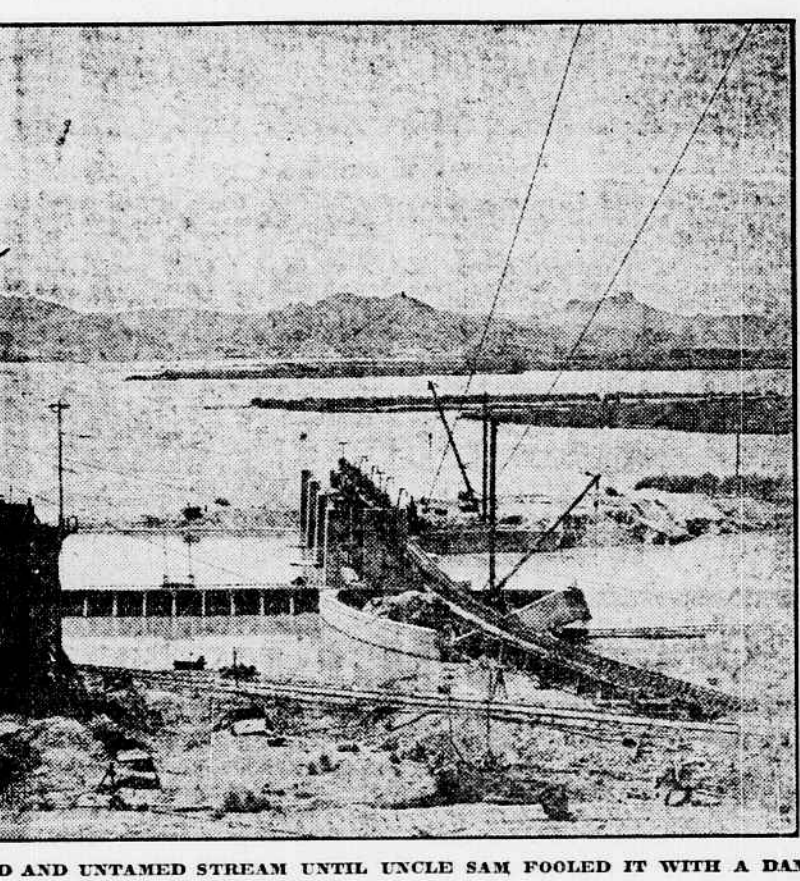
Uncle Sam has been so successful in these practical jokes that, perhaps, some April fool day, he may decide to take up the Mississippi river, turn it upside down and thoroughly irrigate the upper valley, then turn it back again in time for the summer trade around the delta. It does not sound exactly practical, but then when has he succeeded in turning three streams completely out of their courses and making them flow in opposite directions one might be pardoned for at least contemplating engineering works upon a much larger scale.

Experts of the reclamation service claim that there is hardly any limit to the practical jokes of this kind that they can play on nature, for already 1,500,000 acres of waste land have been reclaimed, 20,000 families have been established on what was formerly desert stretches and \$30,000,000 worth of crops are being raised every year on this reclaimed land while 1,000,000 acres are yet to be served by the water from the works already completed. Concomitantly, the figures bring to the conclusion that the turning of the Mississippi might not be a mere dream, after all—although the government is not planning it yet.

Ten years ago if a person had predicted that long after cotton, the most valuable of its kind in the world, would be grown upon the desert near the lower stretch of the Colorado river he would have been laughed at. Today the joke is on nature, for the government has succeeded in doing just



THE COLORADO RIVER WAS A WILD AND UNTAMED STREAM UNTIL UNCLE SAM FOOLED IT WITH A DAM BUILT ON QUICKSAND.



But the government experts worked out an idea for a huge dam which would remain in place simply by its own weight, resisting alike the force of the river and the treachery of the quicksands which underlie the dam or other work placed thereon. Accordingly, a dam, which weighs



THE GUNNISON RIVER FLOWED TOWARD THE GULF OF MEXICO FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THEN UNCLE SAM FOOLED IT WITH A SIX-MILE TUNNEL AND SENT IT TO THE PACIFIC.

600,000 tons, was built near Yuma and is being checked in its wild career. Experiments proved that the water in the Colorado was not fit for use as it came down from the south, on account of the large percentage of silt and other substances which it carried. Therefore, Uncle Sam again fooled the river by "skimming" the water backed up by the dam and running off only the top foot of this into the irrigation canals and pumping stations. In this manner 120,000 acres of land in Arizona and California have been rendered fertile and valuable instead of a dead waste, as formerly.

In the Minidoka project, in Idaho, Uncle Sam has fooled nature to the extent of making the river supply its own electric power, through the medium of a huge barge anchored in the center of the stream and moved every time the current decides to change its course, which it does quite frequently. By this means the surrounding country is supplied with electric light and electric power at a very low rate, and this is probably the only agricultural project of its kind in the United States where all the farmhouses, schools and public buildings are equipped with electric lights and fans.

In 1904 this region was a desert, with only a few scattered farms hugging the river bank. Today it is flourishing and prosperous, yielding yearly crops valued at more than \$1,500,000. The two schoolhouses are electrically equipped, and throughout the region the air is breathed by the pupils in classrooms which are lighted by the electricity of government engineers and the determination of Uncle Sam not to let the desert remain a barren waste.

Another practical joke which has been played by Uncle Sam is the irrigation of the desert near Salt Lake, in Arizona. The erection of the Roosevelt dam, 284 feet in height, has made this section fertile, and the production of crops valued at \$300 per acre is

proper amount of oxygen, by means of an oxygen tank which will last for two hours, and at the same time will rid the lungs of the poisons of the breath by a tank of potash. The rescuers, equipped with this apparatus, are sent down to the bottom of the trench, where they are enabled to penetrate the poisonous air with impunity to some depth, and, after at least two hours, at the end of which time their supply of oxygen and potash has to be renewed.

The Department of Agriculture, through its many bureaus, is also working long hours in an endeavor to fool nature all the time—not only on the 1st of April.

For people realize that the chrysanthemum, emblem of the spring days of the fall and the flower which appears to be especially dedicated to foot ball games, is the product of long and arduous labor on the part of scientists who have fooled nature. The ancestor of the chrysanthemum was a large daisy which grows with rank profusion in the interior of China.

The Chinese found by an intricate system of grafting and cutting different specimens of this daisy, they could produce flowers which had many more petals than the parent blossoms. This process grew, in time, to the production of the chrysanthemum, much as we know it now.

The introduction of this flower into the United States and its great popularity here led the experts connected with the bureau of plant industry of the Department of Agriculture to experiment with different methods of further deceiving nature in tampering with this plant. They discovered that if all the buds but one were pinched off a plant the entire sustenance and food absorbed by the parent stem would be delivered to this single bud, causing it greatly to increase in size and magnificence. Special kinds of fertilizer and plant food were likewise found to increase this growth—so that now the chrysanthemums grown by Uncle Sam are of the most magnificent size and are specially prepared mixtures, which give them great size and beauty. The latest chrysanthemum show held under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, included many varieties of this flower never before seen, and it is freely predicted by government experts that succeeding years and centuries will witness the development of the flower in this regard and to bring into being plants and flowers which will not be included in the original scheme of things.

The prickly pear is another member of the plant kingdom which science is trying to deceive. Certain relatively "spineless" varieties of this and other cacti have been produced, but the government has discovered one splendid method of protecting this excellent stock food by using the means provided by nature.

The prickly pears are fertilized and treated precisely like any other "crop," thus causing them to triple or quadruple their original size, which, of course, means that the thorns are also relatively larger. Then, when the rancher desires a certain amount of food for his stock, all he has to do is to take a blow pipe, similar to those used by plumbers, and snipe off the thorns, a very simple and easy process.

In this manner he is enabled to raise a crop of thirty tons to the acre of succulent forage, of which the cattle are very fond, and at the same time to prevent the destruction by leaving the thorns on the prickly pears. No fences or other protection are needed and the prickly pears will flourish in soil where nothing else will grow.

The department is also April-fooling the farmer by deceiving the growing of cotton so that it will reach maturity before the weevil gets hungry. It is preventing cedar rust on grapes and by destroying the nearby cedar groves; it is deceiving the rooster and the hen by its campaign against "hatch early and avoid the hen's vacation"; it is tricking hog cholera and hog tuberculosis by scientific inoculation treatment and by keeping the hogs away from possibly infected spots, while the work of its plant and forest specialists is resulting in the continual discovery of new varieties of valuable fruits, and the department is also deceiving the farmer by supplying him with a later colored in a variety of ways by means of dye supplied to the roots.

Uncle Sam, the staid old gentleman, of course, refers to his work as "an improvement upon nature and a deception of the gods, but it is a success," but it is April-fooling, just the same.

New Class of French Army Made Up of 19-Year-Olds

Special Correspondence of The Star.

PARIS, March 29, 1917. — NE week ago the French war minister asked parliament to vote a government bill calling out the youngest Frenchmen liable to army service. They form "the class of 1915"; that is, they will be twenty years old in that year—and twenty is the age when the obligation

price published everywhere that France was calling out seventeen-year-olds to serve as soldiers. Class of 1917—soldiers seventeen years old. Class of 1918—what? Eighteen years old. In both years the youngest soldiers called out by France were nineteen years old.

In the American civil war soldiers were taken down to eighteen years old. In France, even in time of peace, vol-

unteers cultivating little plots of waste was called out to defend and eat the salad they had grown. Something more astonishing still has just happened. What is called a concentration camp for these Kabyles are barracks quite new, with proper floors and windows and conveniences and heating facilities. Before the Germans were brought there the barracks had to be inspected to verify that they fulfilled the exigencies

reprises on French prisoners in the German prison camps. Well, what was thought not good enough for German prisoners, whom Frenchmen are at war, has been turned over to the native volunteers who come from tropical Annam to help France. They are small, dark, with their hands like their Chinese neighbors, and make themselves useful generally. So far they have not seemed to mind the barracks, not even of their being cold in this first real winter which they have ever known.

Another example will show how little justification there is for a campaign carried on to influence neutrals against France. In whose permanent they are represented. Carters and scavengers have been overworked in Paris during the severe winter at hauling coal and food. To take their place in street cleaning, first, women were enlisted for the sweeping—and they were real Parisians. Then, for the heavy work of lifting and carrying, Kabyles from the interior of Alsiers were recruited.

It is hard to see why they are called black savages by the Germans, who blame the French for using them, for these Kabyles are blue-eyed and as fair-skinned as many Germans. They are of the primitive Berber race, who are the Egyptians, and have the strength of their Atlas mountains. And they know how to make their bargains, for they come now by thousands every summer for the harvest in France. And they are sober and keep their money.

STERLING HELLIG.

A Soldier.

GEN. BLISS was relating reminiscences of show battles.

The bluff.

Reviews of New Books

THE WAR AFTER THE WAR. By Isaac F. Marcrosson, author of "How to Invest Your Savings," etc. New York: John Lane Company.

PRACTICAL MAN OF BUSINESS, as well as a forceful and brilliant writer, here makes forecast of the struggle for economic mastery that is bound to follow the close of the present war. The problems in which this new warfare will be set are already in the making. Mr. Marcrosson outlines the most conspicuous and important of these for the sake of giving point to the necessity for a commercial preparedness that will insure the broadest scope of distribution and exchange.

JOSEPH PENNELL'S PICTURES OF WAR WORK IN ENGLAND. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Like Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who makes such splendid use of mere machinery for the purpose of story telling, Mr. Pennell has discovered the pictorial content of machinery. Reproduced here from a series of drawings and lithographs are pictures of the war work in England. It is hardly conceivable that the incredible industrial energy that has turned England into a giant ship shop could be transferred to print as completely as it is presented here. The book fairly hums with motion and achievement.

SHORT RATINGS: An American Woman's View of the War. By Miss Doty. New York: The Century Company.

This record is the outcome of the author's two trips to Europe during the war period. The first one was made on the "Peace Ship," a voyage of which Miss Doty gives a graphic description followed by an account of the Woman's Congress at The Hague. Here also is an account of her own work in the hospitals of France. The second trip took her to Germany and it is of her observations and experiences in the empire that the most illuminating and important part of this record deals. These observations are summed in the title of this book. Everywhere in Germany, according to Miss Doty, there is evidence, not only that the country cannot hold out much longer because of the general shortage of food, but that, besides, there is a general spirit of rebellion against the German government. Germany's salvation lies in Germany's defeat. The whole is a vivid story made up of day-by-day scenes and street episodes, of personal dangers to be avoided by Miss Doty herself and personal feelings to be suppressed. One sees more clearly from this story than from many another that, below potentates and powers, all are alike, just as plain a human being as what ever their national names may be—and in Germany these women and children are hungry, more destitute than they are otherwise. One is not able to read this story without a renewed aching sense of the awful wickedness, the monstrous futility of the thing.

THE WAR OF DEMOCRACY: The Allies' Statement. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.

The chapters of this volume bring together statements from a group of prominent and influential Europeans on the fundamental significance of the war in relation to the new Europe that must result from the struggle. Among those contributing to this many-sided picture are: Lloyd George, Arthur J. Balfour, George Trevelyan, H. H. Asquith, M. Maurice, Sir John Lubbock, Lord Gilbert Murray and Edward Price Bell. Asquith, in a reply to the German propaganda, explains the necessity of fighting for Lord Haldane also discusses it as the war of democracy. Why England is in the war and what she expects to gain from it, not only for England, but for Europe and the world, is discussed by Viscount Grey of Fallodon. Lord Lloyd George tells why the allies will win—they will win because all of them are "just as solid and determined as England, which has been at the head of the world for twenty years of warfare." Maurice Barres gives an eloquent and impassioned picture of the noble soul of France. And at the opening of this discussion from so many points of view the picture of the war is made clearer in an important statement of deep insight and profound philosophic grasp.

AFRAID. By Sidney Dark, author of "The Man Who Would Not Be King," etc. New York: John Lane Company.

This is the story of Jasper Sedley, a coward. Somewhere along the line, since it is easier to condemn fear than to understand it, the world took toll of the boy's spirit for this frailty of the flesh. The story opens with Jasper, not yet eight years old, admitting to his father, Mr. Sedley, that he is afraid of the dark. His father, a brave man, tells him that he must save himself and a bit of his own courage by not being afraid of the dark.

THE FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS OF SEWELL FORD'S "TORCHY" WILL BE GLAD TO FIND HERE SEVENTEEN BRAND-NEW SITUATIONS OF PECULIAR TORCHY-NESS OF QUALITY from entrance to exit. Some with a good deal of humor, unconquerable good nature, kindness with glints of cynicism about it, an amazing brand of slang that works twenty-four hours a day, and a readiness to attack any subject under the sun—these make up Torchey's equipment for his role of happy-go-lucky friend and entertainer. Walk Mason breaks into an ode in honor of Torchey's father, Sewell Ford, asserting with fervor that "the man who chews the world of woe, this vale where sorrow is a bore, who makes two laughs or chortles grow, who is the best that fortune owns, and so on, and so on, in an encomium that this side of the appearance of Torchey is to justify.

WILT THOU TORCHY? By Sewell Ford, author of "Trying Out Torchey," etc. Illustrations by Frank Snapp and Arthur William Brown. New York: Edward D. Clark.

The friends and admirers of Sewell Ford's "Torchy" will be glad to find here seventeen brand-new situations of peculiar Torchey-ness of quality from entrance to exit. Some with a good deal of humor, unconquerable good nature, kindness with glints of cynicism about it, an amazing brand of slang that works twenty-four hours a day, and a readiness to attack any subject under the sun—these make up Torchey's equipment for his role of happy-go-lucky friend and entertainer. Walk Mason breaks into an ode in honor of Torchey's father, Sewell Ford, asserting with fervor that "the man who chews the world of woe, this vale where sorrow is a bore, who makes two laughs or chortles grow, who is the best that fortune owns, and so on, and so on, in an encomium that this side of the appearance of Torchey is to justify.



DEPARTURE OF THE FRENCH ARMY CLASS OF 1917 TO GO INTO TRAINING FOR WAR. ALL ARE NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE.

of military service begins in time of peace. They are to be called together for the few months of training absolutely necessary before they will be fit to go to the fighting front, in April of this year, 1917. That is, the youngest soldiers whom France will have drafted into her army will be nineteen years old.

Note this age, for a great many wrong things will be said about it and against it by parties interested in peace at any price. The French parliament voted the little earlier—in November 1915—the calling out of the class of 1917, and that class went into training in January, 1916, which was also the youngest soldiers in the world. But the propaganda of peace at any

teers could always forestall their compulsory military service by enlisting at eighteen, with their parents' consent. So it has been in this war.

An effort has also been made to persuade neutrals that German prisoners and interned civilians are severely treated. In the spring of last year I saw such prisoners employed on the docks at Marseilles, and they were given a time for siesta after their lunch. The hired laborers—Spaniards and Algerian Kabyles—had no such privilege and looked enviously at them. At Bordeaux, in autumn, I saw Austrian pris-

ers of Germany, without which reprisals are executed on French prisoners and interned civilians held by Germans. The stories of such French prisoners who have been exchanged or allowed to come to Switzerland because of last sickness, like tuberculosis, are not comforting, particularly with reference to food and medical attention. At any rate, the brand-new French prison camp, which would eventually have had to come under the supervision of the French authorities, had not up to the mark of German exigencies. They did not wish to give the least excuse for

from the rainbow books of diplomacy, fixes the moral responsibility for precipitating the war in 1914. The book in turn continues the discussion of the ethics of the war in its particular bearing upon the United States. For the purpose of this discussion the writer reviews certain outstanding facts and aspects of the conflict to bring out the instinctive common sense set up by these facts in the feelings of civilized peoples. This body of revisions against the status and methods of certain phases of the war Mr. Beck calls the common conscience of mankind. For the purposes

of this ethical outlook he uses concrete cases of high illuminating power—the invasion of Belgium, the submarine warfare, the German treatment of the prisoners of war, the wanton individual sacrifice like that of Edith Cavell, the sinking of the Lusitania, and the use of the gas. The book is a standing moral nearly complete. It has seen it elsewhere. With the sum of moral implications and obligations derived from this consideration he has seen it elsewhere. With the sum of moral implications and obligations derived from this consideration he has seen it elsewhere. With the sum of moral implications and obligations derived from this consideration he has seen it elsewhere.

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